

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-12 SSO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 AID-20

RSR-01 /135 W

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O 090825 Z MAY 73

FM USINT CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3012

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION USUN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 1380

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG LE

SUBJECT: GOE REACTION TO RENEWED FIGHTING IN LEBANON

1. SUMMARY: GOE APPEARS TO BE FOLLOWING TWO- TRACK POLICY OF DEMONSTRATING STRONG VERBAL SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIANS, WHILE MAKING STRENUOUS EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT SYRIANS DO NOT INTERVENE ON THEIR BEHALF. END SUMMARY.

2. CAIRO PRESS OF MAY 8-9 IS ALMOST ENTIRELY PREOCCUPIED WITH EVENTS IN LEBANON. AS OCCURRED DURING LAST WEEK' S CLASHES, AHRAH TAKES MOST MODERATE LINE, WHILE AKHBAR (ESPECIALLY) AND GUMHURIYYA SHOW MORE PRO- PALESTINIAN

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TILT. AHRAM' S MAY 9 LINE IS THAT RENEWAL OF FIGHTING IN LEBANON, BROUGHT ABOUT UNDER " OBSCURE CIRCUMSTANCES," IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS MATTER. AKHBAR DECLARES FLATLY THAT LEBANESE ARMY HAS LAUNCHED WAR OF EXTERMINATION AGAINST PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE, AND REPORTS IN HEADLINES THAT SADAT HAS " ORDERED AL- KHOLI TO LEAVE BEIRUT IMMEDIATELY." AKHBAR IN SEPARATE ARTICLE QUOTES NEWS SOURCES FROM TEL AVIV AS STATING THAT US SIXTH FLEET HAS BEEN PLACED ON FULL ALERT AND IS PREPARED TO INTERVENE; SAME ARTICLE QUOTES ALLEGATIONS OF RADIO BAGHDAD THAT SIX US AIRCRAFT HAVE LANDED AT BEIRUT AIRPORT WITH TROOPS AND AMMUNITION.

3. ON MAY 8 GOE ISSUED STATEMENT ON MATTER, WHICH IS CARRIED BY MAY 9 PRESS. STATEMENT PRAISES PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE AS BEING " ONE OF THE MOST MAGNIFICENT ASPECTS OF NATIONALIST PRIDE," " WARNS AGAINST THE GRAVE RESULTS THAT COULD BE THE OUTCOME OF STRIKING THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE, AND CONSIDERS THIS ACT AS BEING HOSTILE TO THE ARAB STRUGGLE." (FULL TEXT TO FOLLOW SEPTTEL.)

4. COMMENT: IN COMPARISON TO PRESS COVERAGE OF LAST WEEK' S FIGHTING, MAY 9 PLAY IS MORE PRO- PALESTINIAN. NEVERTHELESS, GOE STATEMENT IS TAME AND AVOIDS CASTING BLAME ON GOL OR LEBANESE ARMY, NEITHER OF WHICH ARE MENTIONED IN STATEMENT' S TEXT. WHILE GIVING DEMONSTRATION OF VERBAL SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIANS, GOE STILL APPEARS TO BE MAKING STRENUOUS EFFORTS TO CALM CRISIS. MAJOR GOE EFFORT APPEARS AIMED AT SYRIANS: SADAT' S REPRESENTATIVE AL- KHOLI WAS REPORTEDLY " ORDERED TO LEAVE" BEIRUT IN ORDER TO GO TO DAMASCUS, AND CAIRO PRESS REPORTS THAT EGYPTIAN WARMIN ISMAIL VISITED DAMASCUS FOR SEVERAL HOURS ON MORNING MAY 8 FOR URGENT CONSULTATIONS. ISMAIL REPORTEDLY MET WITH SADAT IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS RETURN TO CAIRO ON SAME DAY. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT, DESPITE PRO- PALESTINIAN VERBIAGE THAT HAS INCREASED IN EGYPTIAN PRESS, GOE IS SERIOUSLY ATTEMPTING TO FORESTALL POSSIBILITY OF ESCALATION OF CRISIS BY SYRIAN INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF FEDAYEEN. ONE GOE MOTIVE MAY BE FEAR THAT SYRIAN MOVE INTO LEBANON WOULD INVITE ISRAELI MILITARY ACTION, WHICH IN TURN WOULD PUT STRONG PRESSURE ON GOE TO INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF ITS CAR PARTNER

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